

Love Was Made for Me and You

by Bad Apple

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Summary: Hairspray Love was made for Link and Tracy.

1. Love Was Made For Me And You

Love Was Made for Me and You

The rain was heavy and Link swore to himself. He hadn't anticipated the damp conditions and was forced to walk home from the WYZT studio in his good suit. It was abnormally chilly for Baltimore, Link noticed, and he wrapped his arms around himself. He should've taken Seaweed up on his offer for a ride, but he hadn't known about the weather outside. Link had to maneuver his way around the puddles that had collected on the ground as he walked.

He figured that he'd probably be late for his date with Tracy if he wanted to change out of his wet clothes. They were going to meet at her house and then go to the beach, but Link supposed there would probably be a change in plans. The beach wasn't really all that hip when it was raining.

Link turned the corner near the fire station, wishing that he lived closer to the studio. He usually drove there, but tonight his father was borrowing his car. Link was going to borrow Seaweed's to get to the beach, but decided that that wouldn't be necessary. The rain was coming down harder now, and they felt like little rocks pelting down upon him. His hairspray had rinsed off, leaving a sticky film at the base of his neck. Normally, he would've been concerned that his hair had deflated, but he was too busy with thoughts of catching pneumonia.

Finally, he saw his house at the end of the street. It was a two-story house made of gray brick; not the Ritz or anything, but it was home. His neighbors were all elderly retired couples, who had come out to Baltimore to enjoy the rest of their lives, however short of a time they had left. They were all nice; sometimes Mrs. Baker, the widow that lived across from Link, would invite him over when Mr.

Larkin was running late. She'd make him cookies and he'd swing dance with her, although he'd have to go pretty slow because Mrs. Baker was almost seventy years old. Mrs. Baker would always tell him that he looked so much like her late husband when he was younger, and Link would always thank her for the compliment, although he'd never seen a picture of Mr. Baker.

He walked up to the front door and pulled his keys out of the jacket pocket. With a jingle, he unlocked the door and pushed it open, closing it behind him. He hated the smell of his own house; simply put, his father had a penchant for cigarettes and Link didn't. Whenever he came home, he made sure to walk straight to his room, the only room in the house that smelled somewhat decent. But today was different.

It had been a few years since Link had been in his father's study. That wasn't on purpose; he just had no reason to go. There was nothing of value to him in there, maybe with the exception of a few records his father owned. Yet there he was, standing in front of the intimidating oak door to the study. He hesitated for a moment, and then grasped at the doorknob pulled.

The room was much smaller than he remembered it being; the desk stood in a corner, cramped between a torn globe and pile of books. There was a cupboard on the far side of the room, and Link was suddenly struck with the memory of his mother storing his father's Christmas present there.

"Don't say anything to him, Link," she had warned her son. "I finally found the perfect hiding spot."

Link smiled bitterly as he recalled how he had ended up telling his father the gift was there anyways, and he'd ended up opening it early. It had been a small box of golf balls. His father had laughed about how he hated golf and told his son to keep it a secret as he skillfully wrapped the present back up, making Link wonder if he had peeked at his presents before.

The deafening ring of the phone disrupted Link's thoughts, and he tore his gaze from the cupboard. He quickly shuffled out of the room, being careful to shut the door behind him quietly. Link wasn't sure why he did this.

He jogged over to the phone and picked it up on the fourth ring.

"Hello?"

"Link, I'm gonna be late again tonight." His father's voice sounded gravely over the receiver.

Link didn't even pretend to sound disappointed. "Okay."

He knew that when his father said he was 'staying late' it meant that he had found another easy chick that thought balding advertising agents oozed sex appeal.

"...Well, I suppose I'll see you in the morning," he said in a business-like tone that made Link cringe.

Just when he was about to respond, Link heard the gaudy dial tone sound in his ear. He placed the handset back down onto its holder and headed out the door.

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This story will be continued, and I think I'm going to have an update in the next few days. Thanks for reading!

2. The Way You Look At Me

The Way You Look At Me

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"Lincoln Larkin, you are absolutely soaking wet."

Mrs. Baker stared incredulously at the teenager that was standing before her, his clothes completely drenched. She'd been woken from an afternoon nap by the sound of her doorbell being rung profusely, and she had dashed to the door, or at least moved as fast a woman of her age could. Initially, she had been irritated; she hated it when someone interrupted her afternoon naps. But when she had opened the door and seen the boy from across the street standing before her, she was overjoyed. Now someone could try her new raisin cookie recipe.

"Well, come in," Mrs. Baker motioned for him to enter, and Link gave her a smile.

"Thanks, Mrs. Baker," he said, giving her a kiss on the cheek. "I would've brought over those Nat King Cole records, but I forgot."

Mrs. Baker closed the door behind him and shook her head. "What am I going to do with you, Lincoln?"

She knew that he didn't like being referred to by his given name, but he let her do it anyways. She wondered if he only did it because he pitied the old widow.

"That's what everyone says," Link laughed and looked down at the floor, which was now gathering puddles thanks to his wet clothes. He looked at Mrs. Baker with an apologetic look on his face, and she waved her hand in the air.

"It's fine. Now, change out of those clothes before you catch a cold. You can wear some of Edward's old clothes," she offered, opening the closet behind her. She didn't like going into the closet so much, as all of her late husband's things that weren't taken by his family were kept there. Mrs. Baker quickly grabbed a pair of old flannel pajamas off of the shelf and closed the door.

"Here," she said, handing Link the clothes. "Go ahead and change in the bathroom."

Link took the clothes in hand and nodded, turning the corner. She heard the bathroom door open and close. Mrs. Baker hobbled over to her kitchen and opened the cupboard, taking a plate of her homemade

cookies from inside and placing it on a table. She poured out two glasses of milk, set those down on the table, and sat in her chair. It was a routine she had memorized perfectly ever since Link had started coming over to her house. They'd eat and drink and talk about whatever problems Link was facing, and she'd give him advice. That's just the way it was.

"Thanks for the clothes, Mrs. Baker," Link called, walking into the kitchen. He grinned at her as he reached for a cookie and bit into it.

"These are good, ma'am," he murmured through the crumbs in his mouth. Mrs. Baker looked at him disapprovingly, but was glad that he liked them nonetheless.

"I put extra cinnamon in them this time," she told him, taking one for herself. Link joined her at the table. That's when Mrs. Baker noticed his hair. She nearly choked on her milk.

"What happened?" she said, pointing at the mess on top of his head. "In all the years that I've known you, I've never seen you without at least a can of thatâ€|Mega Grab covering your hair!"

Link laughed, running a pale hand through his black locks. "It's called Ultra-Clutch, Mrs. Baker. And do you really think it's that bad? Because I can go run over to my house andâ€""

Mrs. Baker held her hand up. "It looks fine, Lincoln." She took a drink from her teacup, and Link passed her bottle of pills over to her. Mrs. Baker nodded at him, and took two of the pills into her hand.

"What would I do without you?" she smiled at him, swallowing her medication with a swig of milk.

"Well, you'd probably be a lot better off, for one," Link said, grabbing another cookie from the plate.

"Why would you say such a thing?" Mrs. Baker furrowed her eyebrows at the younger man.

Link's shoulders drooped. "I don't know. Ask my dad. Maybe I'm the reason he's gone all the time."

Mrs. Baker took the teacup from her lips and stared at Link, and teased, "Now, young man. If you were such a horrible person, than why would a great girl like Tracy Turnblad be hopelessly in love with you?"

At the mention of his girlfriend's name, Link's eyes widened. "Oh, God. Tracy. I forgot Tracy. I forgot Tracy."

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Sorry for not updating quicklyâ€|I think the next chapter will be up soon.

The Only One I See

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DISCLAIMER: I think I forgot one of these in the beginning of the story, so here it goes:

I don't own Hairspray or any of its characters. Ka-duh.

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"Tracy, wake up!"

Link had been standing outside Tracy's bedroom window for a few minutes now, rapping quietly on the cold glass. He didn't want to wake her parents up, but he was getting frustrated. He could hear her light snores, and while he thought they were kind of cute, he wished she would just wake up. It was freezing.

"Trace," he hissed. He hit the glass window a little harder this time, praying that Tracy would be the only one to hear it. She stirred a bit, and Link's heart soared. But then she stilled, lying across her bed just as she had been before, and the snoring resumed.

Link rolled his eyes. He leaned his forehead against the window in disappointment. Much to his surprise, he felt the window give a little. On instinct, he snapped his head back, standing up straight, and the window closed again with a loud smack. Cringing, Link ducked down and waited for Tracy's parents to come thundering in, demanding why they had heard her window open. When nothing like that happened, he raised his head cautiously, looking into the room. It was empty; well, empty except for the chubby teenaged girl sprawled out across her mattress.

Ever so slowly, he pushed the window forwards again, opening it so that he could just squeeze through. Grabbing the inside wall, he pushed himself forwards, his stomach scraping against her windowsill. He placed his hands along the floor and walked forwards with them until his feet landed on the ground with a bang. He wasn't really worried about her parents waking up anymore.

"Trace," he whispered, standing up and straightening out his clothes. He walked over to her, placing his hand on her shoulder and shaking gently.

"Wake up," he pleaded, sighing in exasperation. He kneeled before her. "Jesus, you sleep like a log."

Tracy made a whimpering sort of noise. Propping herself on her elbows, she opened her eyes and glared at him.

"You really know how to chop a girl, Larkin," she said, trying to sound angry. "First, you stand her up, and then compare her to a heavy piece of wood."

"Babe, I didn't mean toâ€"

"Where were you?" Tracy asked, sitting up. "I mean, I waited for hours, Link. I called your house, but no one answered. What

happened?"

Link shook his head. "I went home to change out of my clothes, and Iâ€|I couldn't really stay there, you know? So I went over to Mrs. Baker's, andâ€""

"What do you mean you couldn't stay there?" Tracy asked, raising an eyebrow. "Did your dad have girl over?"

Link could've just told her the truth. He could've just told her that went into his father's study and had seen some things that he hadn't wished to see. He could've told her this, but he nodded.

"Yeah," he muttered. "I think it was Judy this time. I went to go visit Mrs. Baker to, you know, get away from them, and I just forgot, Trace. I'm sorry."

Tracy smiled at him, cupping his cheek in her hand. "It's okay, Link. We wouldn't have been able to go to the beach, anyways, I don't think." She scooted out of her blankets, leaned on her wrists, and pushed herself to the side so that she was leaning on her stomach, face towards his.

"You're great, you know that?" he said, smiling at her.

Tracy nodded. "I know." He rolled his eyes and Tracy shoved his shoulder playfully.

"Hey!" Link yelped, grinning at her expression of mock-offense.

"Shush," Tracy warned. "My parents might hear you."

Link grinned. "We wouldn't want that, would we?" he said, raising his eyebrows suggestively. Tracy gave him a questioning look.

"What exactly are you intending on doing, Mister Larkin? Because, I do declare, I am a respectable young woman."

He laughed. "A respectable young woman who's guy can't get enough of her." He leaned over and kissed the corner of her mouth.

"Link," Tracy said with caveat. Link ignored her and continued planting kisses around her jaw, trailing down her neck.

"Link," she warned again. "You know thatâ€""

"â€"drives you crazy?" Link finished for her. "Yeah, darlin'. That's why I'm doing it."

"_Link_," she said for a final time. She was frowning.

"What's the matter?" Link's eyebrows furrowed. "Is something wrong?"

Tracy shot a look of disbelief his way. "My parents could walk in any minute!" she hissed. "Can you imagine what my mom would do to you? She'dâ€|she'd castrate you!"

Link let out a snort at this. "Castrate me?" Despite the

outlandishness of that idea, he couldn't help but feel a twinge of nervousness.

"She wouldn't really, would she?"

Tracy shrugged. "You never know."

"Well, putting it that wayâ€œI'd rather not, you know. Haveâ€œthat happen." He muttered, giving a look of disgust. Link leaned his elbows against the bed and pushed himself up. His knees were beginning to sore.

Tracy nodded. "Yeah, I guess not." She looked disappointed. Even though she was the one that told him to leave, she didn't want him to go.

"But, hey, tomorrow's Saturday," Link reminded her. "We have the whole day."

Tracy smiled. "Right. Pick me up at noon?"

Link nodded, standing up. "Sounds great." He looked down at her; her normally flawless hair was hanging by her shoulders in frizzy clumps, there were dark circles under her eyes, and she looked exhausted. And yet, she looked so undeniablyâ€œTracy_. Yeah, that was it, Link decided, she looked like Tracy. Not some dolled-up version of Tracy, but the real Tracy. He liked her this way.

"I'll see you tomorrow," he whispered, giving her a kiss on the cheek. "Okay?"

Tracy beamed, falling backwards onto her pillow. "Okay. See you tomorrow."

Link turned on his heel, walking towards the window. A cold gust of air filled the room as he opened the window, sending a shiver down his spine. He planted his hands firmly onto the windowsill, placing on foot on the ground below him.

"Link?"

"Yeah, babe?"

"Don't be late."

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4. Very, Very Extraordinary

Very, Very Extraordinary

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Link wrung the water out of his tie; it had rained again. He and Tracy had been having a picnic in the park (something he was sure he would get teased about by his buddies later) when the freezing water trickled down on them. Tracy had laughed it off, saying that it was just sprinkling out. But soon enough, the sprinkling turned to pouring rain, and they had to run to his Corvette, him trying to hold

the blanket over Tracy's head while attempting to keep his suit dry.

It didn't work.

He had driven her back to his place, because she didn't want to go home yet, and there weren't very many places in Baltimore that you could go when it was raining and you wanted privacy.

"Sorry," Link said, as Tracy was trying to squeeze the water out of her dress without wrinkling it.

Tracy smiled up at him. "It's not your fault. You don't control the weather, do you?"

"There's a lot you don't know about me," he said, shooting her a grin. It wasn't one of his trademark Corny Collins smiles—it was one reserved especially for her. It definitely wasn't oozing as much allure and charisma as the others, but it was sincere. "After all, I am Link Larkin."

Tracy rolled her eyes. "And that's why I love you."

Link's heart soared, and he gave her a kiss on the cheek, letting his lips hover over her for a moment longer than usual. "Love you, too."

"So," Tracy breathed, taking a step back from him. He gave a silent groan of disappointment. "Do you have any towels?"

Link nodded. "Yeah, of course. The bathroom's the third door to the left, down that hallway." He pointed it out and she walked away.

He leaned against the kitchen counter, letting the sharp edge dig into his back. His father was gone; he had another meeting, or another date. Link had stopped trying to figure out where his father went everyday a long time ago. He had his own life, and his father kept to his. It was a sad, pathetic cycle, Link thought, that every day they managed to say less than ten words to each other. "Good morning", "What's for dinner?", "Good night". Sometimes Link might tell his dad that he was headed over to Mrs. Baker's, sometimes not.

Hoisting himself up onto the counter, Link gripped his tie once more and squeezed it. Little drops of water trickled down the light blue fabric into the sink below, swirling down the drain. He sighed, leaning against the wall once more. He felt tired; he had been feeling exhausted lately.

With all the dance rehearsals that ran late, double dates with Penny and Seaweed (which basically left him feeling like a voyeur, with all the kissing they did), and late night study sessions (because Tracy insisted that he couldn't get below a B in any of his classes, although when Link pointed out that she was the one that was failing history, she retorted with: "Well, at least I actually go to the class, and don't spend my time making out with Amber Von Tussle!" Which Link thought was unfair, seeing as how they'd broken up months ago.), he barely had anytime to think, let alone sleep.

Glancing up at the clock, he realized it had been nearly ten minutes

since Tracy had gone to the bathroom. Link slid off of the counter; his scuffed leather shoes made a squeaking noise as they hit the ground. He walked down the hallway, his muscles aching, and stopped in front of the bathroom door.

"Trace?" he called, giving a soft knock on the door. "You still in there?"

There was shuffling, the sound of fabric tearing, and Link heard Tracy stumbling around.

"Tracy? Are you okay?" Link asked, hand braced on the doorknob.

"Yes," came the reply. "I justâ€|I think I ripped the back of my dress."

Link couldn't help but smile. "You did?"

"Yes, Link," Tracy said sheepishly. "It's almost completely ripped in half. Do youâ€|have any other clothes?"

Link knew that they didn't; in all honesty, if any of his dad's dates had left dresses over (God forbid), they'd probably all be size 0. "I don't think soâ€|but you know, Trace, I could always come in there and try to sew it up."

He could practically hear Tracy roll her eyes. "Link."

"What? Can you blame a guy for trying?" He sighed, running a hand through his sticky, wet hair. "I'll go see if Mrs. Baker has any clothes."

"Thank you, Link!" Tracy chimed as Link ambled back down the hallway, not even pausing to look back at his father's study as he went out the door, the rain pouring down on his head.

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"Link," Mrs. Baker sighed, her hand resting on the doorknob. When she had answered the door moments earlier, she really didn't look the least bit surprised. "What is with your habit of coming to my house soaking wet?"

Link blushed. "Sorry, Mrs. Baker."

"Well, come in," she said. "Don't just stand there. You'll get pneumonia, remember?"

"Oh," he interrupted, shaking his head. "It's okay, Mrs. Baker. I was actually just wondering if you had any spare dresses that I could borrow, please? I'd bring it back tomorrow."

Mrs. Baker shot him a look of questioning. "What reason on this Earth would you have for needing a dress?" She froze. "You're not one of those drag queens, are you?"

"No," Link said, narrowing his eyes in bemusement. "Iâ€|my girlfriend doesn't have a dress, and she won't come out of the bathroomâ€""

She looked completely scandalized. "Are you telling me that you have a nude young woman in your house? Link!"

"No!" Link held his hands up, trying to explain. "No, no, it's not like that, Mrs. Baker. It's just her dress got wet, and it ripped, and oh God, please don't call my dad, 'cuz nothing happened!"

"Link," she said, "calm down. I'm not calling your father." Mrs. Baker sighed, massaging her temples. "I think I have a nightgown somewhere!"

She disappeared from the front door, and Link heard her open the closet door. There was some rummaging around, and she came back a few minutes later with a plaid bundle of fabric cradling in her hands.

"I hope this will do," Mrs. Baker said, handing over the tent-like dress. Link wondered if she chose a dress with absolutely no sex appeal for a reason.

"Thanks, Mrs. Baker," Link said, giving her a grateful smile. "Oh, and I'll bring the records over tomorrow. I found them in my dad's basement."

Link gave her a small nod and sprinted back to his house, trying to ignore the fact that his foot slipped with every step he took.

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"How do I look?" Tracy asked, stepping out of the bathroom. Her hair was frizzy, just like the night before. The makeup that she and Penny had no doubt spent the whole morning applying was now smeared across her face in a clown-like fashion. Mrs. Baker's dress hung there limply on her normally curvy frame, making her look like a Scottish hot air balloon.

Link grinned, giving her a kiss cheek. "Just beautiful, Trace."

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Yay! I finished another chapter! I hope I'll have the next one up soon. :)

5. Even More Than Anyone

Link's hands gripped the flowers so tightly that his knuckles were turning white. The evening was freezing and his eyes started to water, and all he could think about was going back to his warm car, turning up the music, and trying to forget about where he was and what he was doing and the meaning of it all. But he couldn't; he knew where he had to go, and that's where he was going.

He didn't want to, of course. He went every year; her birthday, Christmas, and indiscriminate days in between when he felt like seeing her. Today was the anniversary of her death, and he felt he needed to see her. No, it wasn't that he wasn't used to going; he

just hated the atmosphere. He had accepted what happened to her a long time ago, but he hated thinking about. He hated it, hated it, hated it.

It was December 2nd. When the accident happened, down by the lake. He knew that she had been driving, and then...she lost control. Everything after that had been a blur; Dad stopped caring, Mrs. Baker invited him over, funeral, relatives coming out of town, tuna casseroles, grades slipped, conference with third grade teacher, crying under the oak tree at lunch and recess.

Link passed by an elderly man leaning over someone's grave, tears in his eyes. He smiled weakly at him, and the old man nodded back. Passing through the lanes of tombstones, Link stopped in front of an oak tree.

He finally reached his destination; nestled between two rose bushes was her grave. Just as he remembered. Barbara Anne Larkin, Beloved Wife and Mother, March 17, 1920-December 2, 1955.

She will be missed.

"Hey, Mom," he mumbled weakly, kneeling by her headstone. He placed the lilies nearby, ever so carefully. "How've you been?

"I've been okay." Link lowered himself so that he was sitting on the cold grass. "I met someone. She's everything you'd want in a daughter-in-law, Mom. Not that we're getting married anytime soon, but I really wish you could've met her, Mom. I really wish you could've met her."

The words on her tombstone became hazy. "I really do, Mom. I just know you would've loved her.

"Why'd you have to go so soon? You could've stuck around just a little longer, maybe. Just long enough to meet her. Just long enough to meet Tracy Turnblad. And maybe you could've stuck around a little while after that, to see us get married, and have kids, and see them off to college, and all that stuff grandparents do, you know? You really could've spoiled them, Mom, and I know you would've, too. You're just that type of person."

It was silent. Link let out a heavy, shaky sigh and let his fingers trace over the inscribed words on her grave. He really wished he could go back in time; make her stay home that night. He wished it every day.

"Dad's alright," he told her. "He's still, you know, running around with some chicks. I wouldn't tell you, but I kinda figured you already knew. 'Cuz isn't that what they say at church, and all that? That angels watch their loved ones? And you're an angel, right? Because I don't see how you couldn't be an angel. So, I guess you already know Tracy? Do you like her? I bet you do, Mom.

"Maybe I'll bring her over sometime to visit you, Mom. Would you like that? I think she would. I told her all about you, and she said she wanted to visit you. Maybe I'll bring her over tomorrow?"

Link looked at the ground beneath him, plucking a few stray blades of grass. He sat there for awhile, long after the old man had left. Dark

blue streaks ran through the sky, purple smudges hovering the hillside.

"Excuse me?"

He turned his head to the side. A short, scrawny man stood before him, hair dark as night and bags under his eyes.

"Kid," the man started. "You have to leave now. Gotta clear this place out."

Link nodded, lifting himself off the ground. He looked at the grave one last time before turning to leave. It looked lonely, a harsh gray stone like the ones on his house. A shadow was cast before it, a slanted dome. He walked away slowly, leaving behind the mother that had left him all that time ago, falling from her place in heaven without even a sound.

And for the first time in years, Link Larkin cried.

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6. All That I Can Give To You

Tracy placed the last ornament on the Christmas tree, stepping back to admire her handiwork. She knew Link would love it, he just had to. It screamed Christmas; it even had a star on top, even though it was toppling a little, on account of her being too short to straighten it out. The tree was fake; she had found it in the Larkin's garage, looking for holiday decorations. It was an ugly, aluminum-colored tree, but she loved it anyways. She wondered if maybe Link would think she was crazy for breaking into his house and decorating it, green and red and gold and jingle bells. But then she decided she didn't really care, because she worked hard on it, damnit, and he would learn to love it.

She turned around, lifting a wreath out of a cardboard box labeled 'Barb's Junk'. Tracy wasn't too sure who was Barb was, but she figured that it didn't matter too much. She knew that Barb, whoever she was, would want it to be on displayâ€"to not put it up would be a crime. The wreath was gorgeous; a collection of leaves, pinecones, poinsettias, and it all smelled like December. Eyeing a set of doors on the other side of the room, Tracy grinned. The wreath would look perfect against the dark, rich oak. Carefully taking a nail out of the basket that held her supplies, she walked towards the doors. She hammered the nail over the door; Tracy wasn't sure if Mr. Larkin would want holes in his doors. Placing the wreath onto the nail, she smiled at her work.

"Perfect," she said in approval. "Just perfect." Tracy looked around the room, silently appreciating the dÃ©cor around her. She did a great job; the room looked like a winter wonderland, minus the snow. Maybe she could cut some snowflakes out of paper, like they did in kindergarten. But then again, she had never really been that good at it; her snowflakes usually ended up looking like a piece of paper with accidental slashes hacked into it.

The sound of the front door opening interrupted her thoughts, and she froze. When she left the studio, Link told her he'd be staying for

another few hours to rehearse, because he came in late. Had it already been that long? Tracy let out a loud groan and raced towards the Christmas tree, trying to squeeze herself behind it so that she could hide it. This was supposed to be a surprise—she wasn't even _done_ yet! She hadn't even put out the miniature manger figurine set!

Tracy heard him go into his room. There was a pause, the sound of a bag dropping, and a loud 'Dad?' echoed through the house. She heard his footsteps getting closer, and she backed up further, back resting against the wall.

"Holy crap," Link said in astonishment. Through the branches of the tree, Tracy could see his confused face searching for an answer. "Trace?" he said, peering at her. "Is that you?"

Drat, Tracy thought, maybe if I stay still, he won't notice me.

"Tracy? What are you doing here? Did you do all this?"

Tracy stepped out from behind the tree. "Do you hate it?" she asked, motioning to the decorations around her.

Link turned around to face her. "No," he said softly, moving towards her. "No, not at all, Trace. It looks great. I was just surprised, is all. I can't even remember the last time we decorated this place."

She gave a sigh of relief, and stepped over the empty boxes that once held decorations so that she could hug him. He gave her shoulder a gentle squeeze. "It looks great," he said quietly. "You look great."

Tracy backed away from him so she could twirl her dress around. "You really like it?" she asked nonchalantly, as if it were some old rag that she just happened to throw on. In reality, she had spent hours with Penny that morning trying to figure out the perfect dress to wear. They decided on Penny's confirmation dress; it was fairly modest, with the purest-white fabric that flowed to the ground. They decided to chop off about five inches, give or take, just enough so that she didn't look like a nun, but not too much so that she looked like she was easy.

"Yeah," Link assured her. He grabbed a handful of her dress and pulled her closer, leaning down to kiss her. "You look really beautiful, Trace."

"Thanks," Tracy blushed, and she inwardly cursed herself for being such a dork. "Oh, I almost forgot! Mrs. Baker brought over some chocolate chip cookies a little while ago." She looked around the room, trying to find the plate of cookies in the chaos of ribbons and tape and boxes and packing peanuts. Her eyes landed on them, sitting over a nearby table, like she had special dessert sensing radar. She reached behind Link, standing on her toes to clutch the plate with one hand. When she brought it closer, however, her elbow hit Link's back and the plate dropped to the ground, spreading the cookies across the ground.

"Oh, Link," she said, shaking her head. "I'm sorry, I'll pick

thoseâ€"" Tracy bent over to collect the cookies back onto the plate, but Link held his arm out to stop her.

"Just leave it," he said. "It's fine." He grinned mischievously, stepping towards her. He wrapped his arms around her body, holding her close. "Besides, I can think of something else we could be doing. And it's loads more exciting than picking up cookies."

"Oh, really?" Tracy suddenly felt nervous; not a bad kind of nervous, justâ€|nervous. Like a butterflies-in-your-stomach kind of feeling.

"Of course," Link answered, leaning closer. His face was inches from hers, and her breath caught in her throat. "I'll give you a kiss if you figure it out."

7. Game For Two

Tracy's head was resting against a pillow when she awoke, the moonlight streaming into the room through the window. It was almost blindingly bright, and she squeezed her eyes shut, trying to fall back asleep.

"Trace?" came Link's voice from the doorway. Tracy grumbled, opening one eye. She was in the Larkin's living room, sprawled across their suede couch. She sat up slowly, a look confusion played across her face, and Link set down a glass of water on the table next to them.

"You fell asleep during *West Side Story*," he explained, shaking his head. "Don't see why thoughâ€"those sings were particularly...catchy. My favorite was 'I Feel Pretty'."

Tracy gave him an incredulous look, and he blushed. "Just don't tell anyone."

"Your secret is safe with me," she assured him, grinning. Link sunk down onto the couch next to her. Clutching her hand, he intertwined their fingers, smiling weakly at her.

"Good to know," Link nodded his head, letting out a sigh. Tracy watched him, eyebrows furrowed and lips smashed together. He looked troubled, and she couldn't figure out why. It wasn't something she did, she didn't think, because she had been asleep the whole time. Maybe that's why he was upset; but no, that didn't make sense. She always fell asleep during movies, and he had never gotten angry before.

"What's wrong?" she finally asked. He looked away from the floor and faced her. Instead of assuring her nothing was wrong, like she thought he might do, he shook his head and shrugged. Link opened his mouth to say something, but closed it again, opting to shake his head again instead, burying it in his hands.

"Everything's wrong," Link whispered, more to himself than to her.

"What?" Tracy asked, furrowing her eyebrows.

"Justâ€|I shouldn't have mentioned anything, really. Just forget I said anything."

Tracy rolled her eyes. "I can't just forget you said anything, Link. What's wrong?"

"You'd think I was some freak."

"No, I wouldn't."

"Yes, you would."

"No, I wouldn't," Tracy said through gritted teeth. She hated it when he got so impossible. "Now, would you just tell me what's going on?"

Link bit his bottom lip, and Tracy silently forgave him for his stubbornness. She loved it when he did that, in all honesty. She'd just never tell him that, because it sounded dorky. Even though, in her opinion, she was the definition of 'dork', she tried to cut down on herâ€|moments.

"You're just soâ€|" he began, and then paused. "Can you pass me the water?"

Tracy nodded, grabbing the cup off of the table and placing it into his hands. He gulped the entire thing down, putting the glass onto the floor when he finished.

"Where was I?" Link said, loosening his tie. "Jesus, it's hot in here."

"What are you talking about?" Tracy asked, hugging the blanket closer to her body. "It's freezing."

Link gave a feeble chuckle. "Yeahâ€|I guess so."

"Are you okay, Link?" Tracy asked, giving him a questioning look. "You're acting really strange."

"I'm just," Link raised his voice suddenly, calming down once he saw her surprised expression. His eyes trailed down to her bare legs, which were peeking out of the blanket. "Jesus, Trace, do you think you could cover those up or something?"

"Excuse me?" Tracy said, face growing red. "Do my legs repulse you, Larkin?"

"No, it's not that," Link assured her. "Oh, God no. It's kind of the opposite, actually. You know what, just forget I said anything. Honestly, justâ€|I'll take you home."

Link lifted himself off the couch, walking over to the coat rack. He got one arm through the sleeve of his jacket before Tracy grabbed his hand away.

"What are you talking about? What's going on, Link?"

He shook his head, looking down at her. "I justâ€|I don't know." He walked past her, into the hallway. Muttering something under his

breath, he turned around again to face her.

"Just what gives you the right to be so damnâ€?" I don't even knowâ€|"

"What's wrong with you?" Tracy said, raising her voice. "You're not making any sense!"

"While you were sleeping," Link began. "On the couch, you just looked soâ€|I don't know. Beautiful, Trace. I know that sounds stupid and hackneyed, but it's true. And all I could think about was kissing you, but you were asleep, and you're turning me into some kind of raving lunatic because every time I touch you, I don't want to let go, and I feel like some stalker or something, with all the time I spend thinking about youâ€"

"Link?" Tracy interrupted him. "You're turning purple."

"Oh," Link took a deep breath. "I guess what I'm trying to say isâ€|" Link continued softly, stepping closer to Tracy. "I guess what I'm trying to say is that I love you."

Tracy's heart soared. "I love you, too," she whispered. It was quiet for a few moments; Link regaining oxygen, and Tracy silently celebrating. Finally, she couldn't help herself anymore. She grabbed the back of his head and brought his lips down to hers. She started kissing him, delicate and soft, just like she had seen in the movies. She knew when to tilt her head, and put her arm on his waist.

But then, all of a sudden, his lips were moving against hers feverishly, desperately. She instantly forgot all of those articles she'd pored over, promising her that if she took diligent notes, she'd be the best kisser on her block. He'd never kissed her like this before, she realized. It had always been soft, chaste.

Link pulled back, leaning his forehead against hers. "Sorry," he breathed.

"Don't be," Tracy said, standing on her toes to kiss him again. He pulled her impossibly closer to him, backing up almost subconsciously. Tracy noticed with fleeting concern that they were heading to his bedroom; they tripped through the doorway, regaining balance when Link's back hit his dresser. He broke the kiss to yelp in pain, but Tracy closed her mouth over his once again, swallowing his whimpers until they were gone.

End
file.